

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Rejection under 35 USC 102

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 9-12, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26-27 and 29 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,329,564 to Lebner. In response to this rejection independent Claims 1 and 18 have been amended to incorporate the limitations of formerly dependent Claims 2 and 19, respectively. Specifically, Claims 1 and 18 now recite a bridging portion which is substantially free of adhesive. This feature is not disclosed in the cited Lebner patent. Applicant notes additionally, that the “substantially free of adhesive” limitation is intended to include embodiments which include an adhesive layer over the bridging portion which is blocked with another film or “kill layer” which renders the adhesive in the bridging portion nonfunctional. Paragraph 13 of the application as filed fully supports this claim amendment and the interpretative remark relating to the rendering of an adhesive layer nonfunctional. For convenience, the relevant portion of paragraph 13 of the application as filed is set forth below. It is respectfully submitted that numbered paragraphs 1-5 under the Office Action section headed “Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102” are addressed by the above discussed amendment and remarks.

In preferred embodiments, the entire bridging portion of the one or more connecting members are free of adhesive or alternatively have adhesive, but this is blocked with another film (kill layer) to render the adhesive in the bridging portion nonfunctional.

Claims 1, 2, 10-14, 18-19 and 27-31 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Publication No. US 2004/0204740 to Weiser. It is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been addressed and obviated by the attached Declaration Under 37 CFR 1.131 which evidences Applicant’s invention prior to the 102(e) date of the cited Weiser application. Applicant notes that: 1) the cited Weiser application does not claim the same patentable invention, and 2) the rejection is not based upon a statutory bar. The preceding statements in

this paragraph are also applicable to the rejection of Claims 10-14 and 27-31 in numbered paragraph 7 of the Office Action under the heading "Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102".

Rejections under 35 USC 103

Claims 4, 7, 8, 11, 15, 21, 24, 25, 28 and 32 have been rejected 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,329,564 to Lebner in view of US Patent No. 5,425,702 to Carn et al. It is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been obviated by the amendment to Claims 1 and 18 discussed above. This argument applies with equal force to the rejection of Claims 13, 14 and 30-31 in numbered paragraph 9 of the Office Action under the heading "Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103".

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant acknowledges the statement in numbered paragraph 10 of the Office Action relating to allowable subject matter.

Summary

In light of the above amendment, consideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested. Any deficiency or overpayment should be charged or credited to Deposit Account No. 500282.

Respectfully submitted,



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